

Athenian News :

O R,

Dunton's Dracle.

From Tuesday May the 9th, to Saturday May the 13th, 1710.

The Surprizing-Post, or a brief Narrative of such as have dy'd suddenly, from Eutychus, who fell down dead sleeping at a Sermon, down to the sudden Death of Dr. John Howe : To which is added, an Elegy upon the sudden and much lamented Death of Mrs. Alice Fuller, late of Cripple-gate Parish : Also a Divine Improvement of these sudden Deaths, address'd to all such who are in perfect Health.

THE Decree is out— *All must die.*— Death reign'd from *Adam* to *Moses*; and tho' Death shall not reign, yet it shall live, fight, and prevail, from *Moses* to the End of the World; for then, and not 'till then, shall be brought to pass that Saying that is written— *Death is swallow'd up in Victory.*

One Reason of this dying is, God will have our Bodies to be new cast, and come out beautiful and bright: But, tho' there is nothing more certain than we must all die, yet nothing is more uncertain than the Time when, or in what Manner we shall leave this World; for some die a lingering Death, and some (like Dr. Howe) die suddenly. Then en't it a Matter of Wonder Men should always Coast on the Borders of Futurity, and lay in such slender Provisions for it? Could we see the Dangers that besiege our Lives they'd terrify us from Security, and bring Death and Eternity in our View. The Sinner lives not a Moment but 'tis attended with the Jeopardy of the Grave and Hell; and tho' he may sport with the Terrors and Torments of the Damn'd at a Distance, yet when Death levels at him, and the Period of his Days is come, he'll then be fill'd with fruitless Wishes, that he might live over his Life again, and prevent the Ruin that's now imminent and unavoidable: This must of Necessity be the Case at last of the most daring Impenitent. Could the Lethargick World but doubt the Universality of Death, and whether Mortality

was entail'd on all Men; could the Justice of God (for I challenge a Man to prove himself an Atheist to his own Breast) and the last Sentence at his Bar be once debated, some Colour, I confess, and Pretence, might be produc'd, why Repentance is defer'd: But alas! These are impossible Suppositions; a Man might as well dispute himself out of Being, or into a State of Independency, as free himself from the Chain of Mortality, or get loose from his Obligations to future Judgment: Was the Length of Life of some considerable Continuance, and a Thousand Years the shortest Period, then indeed 'twou'd be no such Miracle, to see a Man lavish away a Hundred, or more, tho' the Folly would be almost infinite in that Case; but to see a Man that's uncertain of an Hour, live as tho' he'd made an Agreement with the Grave, and had Thousands of Years on his Hands; this is such a bold Degree of Madness, that it can't meet a Parallel, either in Nature or Fancy.

Were Men practically convinc'd, that there are but Two States that expect 'em after Death, and that Eternity is the Length and Measure of those States, 'twould raise their Apprehensions, and make 'em fearful, lest their Days shou'd determine before they've sufficiently secur'd their Happiness. The Life of Man is at best, only a dim and precarious Lamp, 'tis expos'd to a Thousand Accidents from abroad, and as many Disorders from within. Death lies in Ambush in every Vein, in every Member, and none know when it may assault them: It doth not always warn before it strikes. If some Diseases are Chronical, others are acute and less lingering, and some are as quick as Lightning, kill in an Instant. Men may be well in one Moment, and (like Dr. Howe) dead the next. How many are taken away, not only in the Midst of their Days, but in the Midst of their Sins? In such Cases what Place, what Time for Repentance, for seeking it, for using Means to attain it, when they have not Room for so much as a Thought of it? Deaths are often sudden and surprizing, and scarce leave a Man the Time to breath out his last Prayer; and seeing there's a World of Certainty depending on the Uncertainty of Life, and our Management while it lasts; the Preparations we make for our Remove can't be too early. Was the important Business of Life once finish'd, and the Interest of the Soul secur'd, a Man might then enjoy a calm Serenity, in the very Face of Death and Danger. Nothing could ruffle his Quiet, while he anticipates the Joys of Heaven, and is all intent on his future Rest; and tho'

tho' his Mind were not priviledg'd with a manifest Evidence of his Change, yet his Safety would stand unshaken, and his Crown wait for him, in sure Reversion: Death can only threaten him with the short Pains of his Exit, and translate him to Glory; and tho' the grim Messenger mayn't give him a Minute's Warning, he'll only send him sooner to his Happiness; and the more sudden the Change, the greater the Surprise of Joy. — 'Tis a Mercy (says Mr. Taylor, in his Sermon occasion'd by the sudden Death of Mr. Nathaniel Vincent) "to be carry'd away into that Heaven into which Satan can never enter, in so swift a Manner that he shall not be able to fling one of his fiery Darts after us, to wound, or so much as to affright us in our Passage thither. For my own Part, (continues this pious Divine) on mature Deliberation, I don't think it a desirable Thing for a good Man, who is ready to be worn away, like a Stone, by a long and continual Dropping. May my House and Soul be in Order, and then the sooner it quits this vile Body, and leaves this wretched World, if in the twinkling of an Eye, so much the better: To which there is but one Circumstance more, which I should desire may be added, viz. That I may die preaching the everlasting Gospel, or administering the Lord's Supper. May my Taper be blown out in the Sanctuary, and may I presently pass, in an Instant, from serving the Church Militant here on Earth, to joyne with the Church Triumphant in Heaven. — But tho' sudden Death is a Mercy to a good Man, 'tis sent in judgment to a harden'd Sinner; for that Man's Misery can't be express'd, whose Sins are yet uncancell'd, whose God is his Enemy, Death within his View, and Misery and Hell beyond, and (tho' in perfect Health) may die suddenly.

Then seeing Instances of sudden Death are most affecting, I'll here present the Reader with — *A Surprising-Post, or a brief Narrative of such as have dy'd suddenly, from Eutychus, who fell down dead sleeping at a Sermon, down to the sudden Death of Dr. John Clowe, and shall conclude this surprising Narrative with a divine Improvement of these sudden Deaths, and address it to all such who are in perfect Health.*

Sudden Death is often nam'd both in the Old and New Testament, but I shall only (for Brevity Sake) begin my *Surprising-Post*, or *Narrative of sudden Deaths*, from *Eutychus*, who fell down dead sleeping at a Sermon.

'Tis said *Acts 20. v. 9.* *And there sat in a Window a certain young Man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep Sleep; and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with Sleep, and fell down from the third Loft, and was taken up dead.*

Here, Reader, observe what a Warning the Holy Ghost leaves upon Record, for such as sleep under the Preaching of the Word. *Eutychus* when asleep under *St. Paul's* long Sermon, falls down from the Third Loft, and is taken up dead. Here note the Time when he was overtaken with Sleep, not at Noon-day, but at Midnight. This is not the Case of our common Sermon-sleepers, who at Noon-day sleep under the Word. But what if with *Eutychus* any of them be seiz'd with sudden Death, there is no *Paul* to raise them up? Or, what if this wretched Contempt of the Word provoke God to say, *Sleep on, and be so stupify'd that no Ordinances shall awake you.*

The sudden Voice of *St. Peter* compell'd *Ananias* and *Sapphira* to expiate their Crime by as sudden a Death,

whose Souls the greatest Part of Divines believe to be freed from eternal Punishment thereby. — *Fulco*, King of *Jerusalem*, as he was hunting a Hare, fell from his Horse, and was trampled to Death by his Hoofs, and so gave up the Ghost. — Sound and merry was *Tarquin*, when he was choak'd with a Fish-bone. — Healthy also was *Fabius*, when a little Hair that he swallow'd with his Milk, cut the Thread of his Life. — A Weazel bit *Aristides*, and in a Moment of Time he expir'd. — The Father of *Cæsar* the Dictator, rose well out of his Bed, and while he was putting on his Shoes he breath'd his last. — The *Rhodian* Ambassador had pleaded his Cause in the Senate even to Admiration, but expir'd going over the Threshold of the Court-house. — A Grape-stone kill'd *Anacreon* the Poet, and if we may believe *Lucian*, *Sophocles* also. — *Lucia*, the Daughter of *Marcus Aurelius*, dy'd with a little Prick of a Needle. — *Brebius Pamphilus*, being in his Pretorship, when he ask'd the Time of the Day of a certain Youth, perceiv'd that to be the last Hour of his Life.

The Breath of many is in Haſt, and unexpected Joy expels it; as we find it happen'd to *Chilo* the *Lacedæmonian*, and *Diagoras* of *Rhodes*, who embracing their Sons that had been Victors at the *Olimpick Games*, at the same Time, and in the same Place, presently expir'd. —

Have not many gone well to Bed, that have been found dead in the Morning? — *Malcolm* the First, King of *Scotland*, after many Examples of Justice, while he was taking Cognizance of the Actions of his Subjects by Night, was on a Sudden suffocated. — *Charles* the Eighth of *France* having concluded a Marriage between his Daughter *Magdalene* and *Ladislaus*, King of *Bohemia*, while the Bride with great Pomp was convey'd towards her intended Husband, he was taken suddenly with Sickness and dy'd.

What, shall I mention the Child kill'd by an Isicle dropping upon his Head from the Pent-house? whom *Martial* laments in the following Verses.

*Where next the Vissan Pillars stands the Gate,
From whence the falling Rain wets Cloak and Hat,
A Child was passing by, when, strange to tell,
Upon his Throat a frozen Drop there fell,
Where, while the Boy his cruel Fate bemoan'd,
The tender Point strain melted in the Wound.
Would Chance have us adore her lawless Will?
Or tell where Death is not, if Drops can kill?*

Governour Eaton, at *New-haven*, and *Governour Hains*, at *Hartford*, dy'd in their Sleep, without being sick.

That excellent Man of God, *Mr. Norton*, as he was walking in his House in *Boston*, was taken with a *Syncope*, fell down dead, and never spake more.

'Tis the Saying of *Ananias*; Uncertain it is, saith he, in what Place Death may expect thee; therefore do thou expect Death in every Place.

*We trifle, and at Distance think the Ill,
While in our Bowels Death lies lurking still:
For in the Moment of our Birth-day Morn,
That Moment Life and Death conjoyn'd were born;
And of that Thread, with which our Lives we measure,
Our Thievish Hours still make a rapid Seizure.*

*Inensibly we die; so Lamps expire,
When want'g Oil, to feed the greedy Fire.
Tho' living still, yet Death is then so nigh,
That oft-times as we speak, we speaking die.*

Of these sudden Deaths I could give the Reader Two Hundred Instances that have happen'd in London, and many of 'em that have happen'd within my own Knowledge. When such Strokes are multiply'd there is undoubtedly a speaking Voice of Providence therein: To my own Observation, in April last, within the Space of Three Weeks there were Six sudden Deaths, (besides the sudden Death of Dr. Howe, and of a Gentleman who fell down dead near the Temple) which sudden Deaths were in Respect of sundry Circumstances exceeding awful, and for that Reason deserve our most serious Thoughts: Not that there is any Reason for Christians to pray absolutely against sudden Death. Some holy Men (like Mr. Taylor) have, with Submission to the Will of God, desir'd and pray'd for such a Death.

So did Mr. Capel, and God gave him his Desire; for on September 21. 1656, having preach'd twice that Day, and perform'd religious Duties with his Family, he went to Bed, and dy'd immediately.

The like is reported by Dr. Fuller, in his Church History, concerning that Angelical Man Mr. Brightman, who would often pray, (if God saw fit) that he might die rather a sudden than a lingring Death; and so it came to pass: For, as he was travelling in the Coach with Sir John Osborne, and reading of a Book, (for he would lose no Time) he was taken with a fainting Fit; and tho' instantly taken out in the Arms of one there present, and all Means possible us'd for his Recovery, he there dy'd, August 24. 1607.

The learned and pious *Wolffius*, on May 23. 1600. being in usual Health, was, after he had din'd, surpriz'd with a sudden Illness, whereof he dy'd within a few Minutes.

That holy Man, *Jacobus Faber*, who did and suffer'd great Things for the Name of Christ, went suddenly into the silent Grave. On a Day, when some Friends came to visit him, after he had courteously entertain'd them, he laid himself down upon his Bed, to take some Repose, and no sooner shut his Eyes, but his Heaven-born Soul took its Flight into the World of Souls.

God who is a Rewarder of those who diligently seek him, was pleas'd to give a *Quietus est* to the Reverend Mr. Hurst, suddenly taking him from his Work, to receive his Wages, advancing him from the Pulpit to the Throne, April 14. 1690.

Bishop *Jewel* (who did often say, *It did best become a Bishop to die preaching*) was struck with Death in the Pulpit, like Mr. Hurst.

Mr. Wells and Mr. Pledger did both die suddenly on the Lord's Day.

Mr. Vines went to his eternal Rest the Night after his preaching and administering the Lord's Supper; on whose sudden Death one of his Hearers bestow'd these Lines.

*Our English Luther, Vines, whose Death I weep,
Stole away (and said nothing) in a Sleep:
Sweet, like a Swan, he preach'd that Day he went,
And for his Cordial, took a Sacrament.
Had it but been suff'ed— he would die,
His People sure had stop'd him with a Cry.*

Mr. *Hollingworth* of Manchester, who when at a Fast, in Praying and Preaching he had as far out-done himself that Day as he us'd to out-do other Ministers, chang'd his Habitation here for a better, upon the irresistible Stroke of a deadly *Apoplexy*.

That truly pious and humble Divine, Mr. *John Oakes*, was carry'd dead out of the Pulpit; as was also that learned and pious Professor, Dr. *Josias Hoyl*, out of the University Pulpit in Oxford. Death which came to 'em was in Haist, and made quick Dispatch.—— And the famous Mr. *Ambrose*, the pious Mr. *Skuell*, and the laborious and much follow'd Mr. *Watson*, dy'd as suddenly.

Mr. *Nathanael Vincent* was suddenly taken ill in the Morning (June 22. 1697.) and had Leisure only to say, *I find I am a dying, Lord, Lord, Lord, have Mercy on my Family and Congregation.* So near (as Mr. Taylor observes) did his People lie to his Heart, even in his last Moments. Herein he resembl'd his and our common Lord, who having loved his own, loved them even to the End.

Mr. *Thomas Gouge* dy'd in the 77th Year of his Age, October 29. 1681. It so pleas'd God, that his Death was so sudden, that in all Probability he himself hardly perceiv'd it when it happen'd; for he dy'd in his Sleep. So that we may say of him, as it is said of David: *After he had served his Generation, according to the Will of God, he fell asleep.* (In the same sudden Manner dy'd that pious and aged Divine, Mr. *Gerrard*, formerly Minister of *Aston Clinton*.) I confess that a sudden Death is generally undesirable, and therefore with Reason we pray against it, because so very few are sufficiently prepar'd for it. But to Mr. *Gouge*, the constant Employment of whose Life was the best Preparation for Death, that was possible, no Death could be sudden; nay, it was rather a Favour and Blessing to him; because, by how much the more sudden, so much the more easy: As if God had design'd to begin the Reward of the great Pains of his Life, in an early Death. And indeed it was rather a Translation than a Death, and saving that his Body was left behind, what was said of *Enoch* may not unfitly be apply'd to this pious and good Man, with Respect to the Suddenness of his Change, *He walked with God, and was not, for God took him.*

—— *Martin*, who was a Cambridge Carrier for several Years, did July 26. 1701. go with a Friend of his to see the Ship call'd the *Royal Sovereign*, and when he came a-shoar at *Billingsgate* from seeing it, did complain that he was very dry; but his Friend not being inclinable to drink, put it off 'till he came to the *George and Vultur*, a Tavern in *Cornhill*; where calling for a Pint of Wine, whilst the Drawer went for it he dropp'd down dead, and never spake more.

July 31. 1701. About Seven of the Clock at Night, a Person living in *Coleman Street*, walking thro' the upper *Moor-fields*, (in as good Health and Strength as ever he was in his Life) fell down dead, and never spake one Word.

Mr. *Dalton*, an Apothecary in *Old Fish-street*, went to Bed very well, about the Middle of *January*, 1702. and was found dead in his Bed next Morning.—— And in the same Month Mr. *Jackson*, an eminent Merchant in *Token-house-yard*, dropp'd down dead in his Chamber, as he was reading a Letter.

A Person in *Red-lion-street* (not long since) was ask'd whither he was going? he answer'd, *To the Devil.* Upon which he immediately dropp'd down dead.

March

March 21. 1710. Dr. John Howe, an eminent Physician, fell down dead in the Poultry of an Apoplexy. He was Son to that famous and learned Nonconformist Minister, Mr. John Howe; but neither Piety, Learning, or Skill in Physick, can exempt a Man from the Stroke even of sudden Death; as I prov'd at large*,

* See Dunton's in Answer to this Question, *Whether any Man prepar'd for Death, can be said to die suddenly?*

Whilst Mr. B. Collet was preaching upon these Words—*Behold the Lord cometh with Ten Thousand of his Saints, to execute Judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly amongst them, of all their ungodly Deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard Speeches which ungodly Sinners have spoken against him*—the Hand of the LORD of HOSTS went out against the Clerk's Daughter of Brokington in Gloucester-shire; for she gave a sudden great Shriek, and fell down dead before them all. Those that were about her rub'd and chaf'd her for her restoring, but there was no Appearance of Life at all.

Two of my near Relations dy'd suddenly. My eldest Sister, Mrs. Sarah Saul, (who had the Honour to be call'd the learned Midwife) going to Bed well one Saturday Night about Ten of the Clock, bled to Death before Eleven that Night, at Mr. Marriot's House in New-street.—— And my younger Brother, Mr. Lake Dunton, was kill'd fighting of a Duel in Flanders. He was then a Commission-Officer in Her Majesty's Army, and this the Seventh Duel he had fought.

Several Persons of late have dy'd suddenly in Cripple-gate Parish.—— A Cheesemonger at the Corner of Golden-lane, was struck with sudden Death. And so was an Ale-house keeper in Barbican.—— And Mrs. Alice Fuller, late Wife to Mr. Adam Fuller, a Gardiner in Brick-lane, dy'd suddenly. Mrs. Fuller dy'd at the very Time whilst I liv'd in the House with her; and seeing she was Wife to honest ADAM, (my kind Landlord) I'll first tell you how she surpriz'd us, in leaving the World, and then conclude my Relation in a short Elegy upon her sudden and much lamented Death.

Mrs. Fuller and her Husband had been both in my Chamber that Day she dy'd, to consult about making a Chimney in my Closet, that my *Phoenix*-Collection of Books and Pamphlets might no longer be damag'd by the great Moisture that had rotted some of my greatest Rarities: And meeting her again that Day about Two of the Clock, I thought I never saw her more chearful than at that Time. But returning to my Lodging about Ten at Night, News was brought me Mrs. Fuller was dead. I think I was never more surpriz'd in my whole Life, having seen her twice that Day in perfect Health. Upon this astonishing News, I advis'd her sorrowful Husband to send for an able Doctor, telling of him, that my own Mother lay Three Days in a Trance, and then reviv'd, to the great Joy of my Father and all her Friends: But the Doctor was no sooner arriv'd, but found her to be stark dead. Reader, you may better conceive, than I express, how Mr. Fuller was struck with this killing News, for hasty Death had now snatch'd out of his Bosom one of the best of Wives and Friends.

It is the Crown of Blessings when in one Woman a Man findeth both a Wife and a Friend; but the dearest Friends must part, and the Suddenness of it in Mrs. Fuller, was a Sort of double Death to her Friends; but more especially to her tender Husband. She went in

Health that Day to Mrs. Granger's Funeral, (one of her Neighbours) and continu'd perfectly well to the very Minute she dy'd, which happen'd in this surprizing Manner.— *Just as the Corps was carrying to Church, she calls for a Glass of Wine, and had no sooner drank it up but she drop'd down dead without so much as fetching one Sigh or Groan.* Which startling Providence, sure those that saw it with their own Eyes (or read it in this Paper) will never forget: And which yet render'd it the more dismal, those very Bearers that were going to carry Mrs. Granger to her long Home, were first order'd to carry Mrs. Fuller's dead Body to her own House, where I'll now leave her with this short Elegy upon her sudden and much lamented Death.

An Elegy on the sudden and much lamented Death of Mrs. Alice Fuller.

WHEN the old flaming Prophet climb'd the Sky,
Who at one Glimpse, did vanish, and not die,
He made more Preface to a Death than this,
So far from sick, she did not breath amiss:
She who to Heaven more Heaven doth annex,
Whose lowest Thought was above all our Sex,
Accounted nothing Death but t' be repriev'd,
And dy'd as free from Sickness as she liv'd.
Others are drag'd away, or must be driven,
She only saw her Time, and step'd to Heaven;
Where Seraphims view all her Glories o'er,
As one return'd, that had been there before.
Such Saints as this by Death were ne'er surpriz'd,
She waits for Death whose Life is Angeliz'd.
She vanish'd, we can scarcely say she dy'd,
For but a NOW did Heav'n and Earth divide:
She pass'd serenely with a single Breath,
This Moment perfect Health, the next was Death.
As gentle Dreams our waking Thoughts pursue;
Or, one Dream pass'd, we slide into a new:
So softly Death succeeded Life in her,
She did but dream of Heav'n, and she was there.
No Pains she suffer'd, nor expir'd with Noise;
Her Soul was whisper'd out with God's still Voice:
As an old Friend is beckon'd to a Feast,
And treated like a long familiar Guest;
He took her as he found, but found her so,
As one in Hourly Readiness to go.
Ev'n on that Day, in all her Trim prepar'd,
As early Notice she from Heav'n had heard,
And some descending Courtier, from above,
Had giv'n her Timely Warning to remove;
Or counsell'd her to dress the Nuptial Room,
For on that Night the Bridegroom was to come.
He kept his Hour, and found her where she lay,
Cloath'd all in White, the Liv'ry of the Day.
Scarce had she sin'd, in Thought, or Word, or Act,
Unless Omissions were to pass for Fact;
That hardly Death a Consequence cou'd draw,
To make her liable to Nature's Law.
And that she dy'd, we only have to shew,
The Mortal Part of her she left below:
The rest (so smooth, so suddenly she went)
Look'd like Translation, thro' the Firmament;
Or like the fiery Carr, on the Third Errand sent.